

First Day Ideas for Creating a Welcoming Environment

The Importance of Identity

- In many cultures, one's name is an important part of one's identity. The name on one's legal documentation can differ from what a student uses for many reasons (divorce, protection, fear of teasing, sex change, etc.) One practice is to **have students introduce themselves** either face to face, on line, or through a survey by asking, "What do you like to be called?" or "Tell us your preferred name."
- The gender with which a student identifies is not necessarily apparent. Asking a student to share the pronouns they use to identify themselves, either on a first class survey or as students share their names for the first time in class, can signal acceptance and belonging. One way is to ask, "*Please tell us the name you would like us to use and the pronouns you use to identify yourself. For example, I'd like you to call me _____ and the pronouns I use are she/her/hers.*" For background, see:
<http://improvingoutcomesconference.com/whats-the-deal-with-gender-pronouns/>
- Many Shasta College instructors use a **first day survey** to ask questions that demonstrate personal interest, can help connect material to student interests, to gather a sense of the knowledge and experiences in the room, or because they enjoy supporting students by attending campus events in which they are involved. **Check in at the Equity Canvas Shell** for some examples, accessed through
<https://shastacollege.instructure.com/enroll/NNTANY>

Connection with Resources

- Consider including a section in your syllabus that encourages use of campus resources. A template and an example are below.
- The Student Success Center in the 100 building is an excellent go to resource.
- Encourage or incentivize students visiting the excellent resources in the Tutoring and Learning Center. Student Equity Ambassadors will be providing tours of the center this semester and look for an announcement about snacks that will be provided at Supplemental Instruction and Tutoring sessions.
- Students with need for connection to community resources can be connected to a counselor (if they are in a program like PACE, EOPs, TRIO, etc., they should see that counselor first), to community resources noted under Student Services and the Student Equity or CalWorks tab, or they can write equity@shastacollege.edu for resources and referrals.

Setting the Tone

While not every course tackles sensitive material, vulnerable conversations are not limited to select disciplines. Setting the tone with classroom agreements (see below for one example), provides an opportunity to set a tone of mutual respect and learning. Check in at the Equity Canvas Shell for more examples in the near future. Please share yours there as well by emailing equity@shastacollege.edu.

Sample Syllabus Language

On Campus Resources: Draft Language for Syllabi or Canvas

Take advantage of the Shasta College resources that will help you succeed. There are numerous resources on campus designed to help students. These include the library's Reference Desk, the Science Learning Center, the Writing Center, Math and Business Learning Center, English as a Second Language (ESL) Learning Center, Partners in Access to College Education (formerly DSPS), Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS), Sci Fi Foster Youth Program, Career and Transfer Center, and Health and Wellness Services. You can learn more about these services in chapter 8 of the Shasta College catalogue or by checking out the **Resources** and **Student Services** tabs on the Shasta College website. Learn about services and resources in your community by clicking on <http://www.shastacollege.edu/CalWORKs>, then the **Community Resources** tab.

Currently, a Community Health Advocate is on campus the 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month from 9 to 2 in room 2215B; the advocate helps students assess food resource, health coverage, and other referrals. Additional information can be found in various offices including the Student Success Center in the 100 building and the Office of Student Equity and Inclusion in the 2000 building; for additional community referrals dial 211 and follow the prompts.

*During spring of 2018, you can ride RABA for free with an active Shasta College Student ID. Get your ID and/or sticker for \$10 in the Student Senate office in the 2300 building. (Some programs help pay for ids.)

Sample Simple Discussion Guidelines

You could choose to elicit guidelines from the group, share the ones you feel are critical and ask if there are any others that should be included to establish a respectful, civil space for engaging in discussions and different ideas.

Discussion Guidelines

- Share information without demeaning, devaluing, or "putting down" others for their experiences or perspective.
- Agree to address any myths and stereotypes related to the topic or others' positions.
- Actively pursue information. We will likely raise more questions than we can answer.
- Agree not to blame ourselves or others for any misinformation we have learned.
- We will assume positive intent.
- We acknowledge that we all will be learning throughout our lives; no one knows everything; we can always do better.
- We agree not to share what another student has shared in small group or class discussion. We will maintain confidentiality and allow students to share their own stories if they wish.